

# TOWARD A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

## WORTH THE MONEY

THINGS YOU CAN BUY TO STOP WASTE AND SAVE MONEY

**A**CCORDING TO *Do It Green!* magazine, published by the Twin Cities Green Guide, there are certain items consumers can buy to reduce waste and save money. Sound good?

The City of Bloomington Farmers

Market has organic cotton tote bags available for just \$10. Bags can be purchased at the Parks and Recreation Counter at Civic Plaza, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road, or at the Farmers Market this summer.

The following are the top items to buy:

- 1** Reusable shopping bags.
- 2** Faucet aerators – reduce water flow by half.
- 3** Rechargeable batteries.
- 4** Compact fluorescent light bulbs – a compact bulb will last 6,750 more hours than a 60 watt incandescent.
- 5** Cloth diapers – disposable diapers go into landfills and take up to 500 years to decompose.
- 6** Use alternative transportation one day a week – if only 1 percent of U.S. car owners did not drive to work for one day a week, it would keep 840 million pounds of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.
- 7** Local produce – buying locally sustains the environment.

For more information, visit [www.doitgreen.org](http://www.doitgreen.org).

## SHOPPING "GREEN"

MAKING SMART CHOICES TO BENEFIT THE ENVIRONMENT

**W**HETHER YOU CHOOSE to buy organic or

not, there are many ways to shop "green."

By remembering a few basic

shopping guidelines, you

can reduce your impact on the environment. Some important tips to remember from the Twin Cities Green Guide include:

- Avoid excess packaging.
- Shop with a cloth bag and avoid using paper or plastic.
- Buy products in recyclable containers.
- Purchase only reusable or longer-lasting items.
- Buy locally or buy in bulk whenever possible.

For more information, visit [www.doitgreen.org](http://www.doitgreen.org).



**EARTH ACTION HEROES**  
Earth Action Heroes protect the earth. Whether it's saving energy or guarding Bloomington's precious natural resources, these individuals are making a difference. Here are your neighbors in action ...

## EARTH ACTION HEROES THE GREEN GROCERS

**M**INNESOTANS ARE increasingly aware of the personal, environmental and economic benefits of buying from local providers, according to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Many environmentally conscious consumers who shop for food locally are making a commitment to do so because they feel less mileage on their food means less fossil fuels used in transport, less packaging, and tastier and more nutritious eating.

As locally grown and organic foods are becoming more and more popular throughout the Twin Cities, grocers are offering a wider selection of the foods. Bloomington is no exception. Walk into almost any grocery store in the city and you'll find at least an aisle dedicated to organic products. In some cases, you'll

even find an entire store. Fresh and Natural Foods, which recently opened a store on 90th Street and Penn Avenue, offers a wide variety of organic and locally-grown foods, in addition to free wellness classes with topics ranging from heart-healthy cooking to weight management.

What makes organic food different from conventionally-grown foods? Chief Operating Officer of Fresh and Natural Foods Kerry Larson says it's about quality and freshness. "Organic produce

is pesticide and herbicide-free, meats and poultry are free of antibiotics and hormones and deli meats are nitrate-free."

Organic and locally grown food is not only good for the environment; it's also good for the local economy.

"Utilizing

products that are grown or produced in the Twin Cities area supports local businesses, and the product, if perishable, is fresher," said Larson. "Transportation needs are also minimized if the product is locally produced."

Fresh and Natural Foods meat manager Paul Heimel, who has worked in the meat industry for more than 40 years, emphasizes the importance of supporting local farmers. Heimel can tell you exactly where every item of food in his department comes from.

"We have beef from Bill in Cannon Falls, pork from Tim in Iowa, Larry's chickens, bison from Chisago City and turkey and eggs from Owatonna," said Heimel.

To purchase organic and locally-grown food, visit Fresh and Natural Foods, your local grocer or come to the Bloomington Farmer's Market, held Saturdays, July - October, in the east parking lot of Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road.

### DID YOU KNOW?

About 70 percent of Americans occasionally buy organic food, and nearly one-quarter of Americans buy organic every week, according to the Hartman Group, a market research firm.



## ORGANIC LABELING KNOW WHAT YOU'RE BUYING

**H**OW DO YOU KNOW that the food you're buying is really organic? The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Organic Foods Production Act and the National Organic Program use labeling to assure consumers that organic foods are produced and certified to meet national organic standards. Labeling is based on the percentage of organic ingredients in a product.

According to the USDA, products labeled as "100 percent organic" must contain only organically produced ingredients (excluding water and salt). Products labeled "organic" must consist of at least 95 percent organically produced ingredients. Only products meeting the requirements for "100 percent organic" and "organic" may display these terms on their principal display panel.

Products that contain at least 70 percent organic ingredients can use the phrase "made with organic ingredients" and list up to three organic ingredients on the principal display panel. However, the USDA seal cannot be displayed on the package.

For more information, visit [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).



Look for the USDA seal or mark on the product package.



### DEFINING ORGANIC WHAT IT MEANS TO BE GREEN

Organic food products are regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). To qualify as organic by the USDA, food must come from crops that are grown without synthetic pesticides, artificial fertilizers, irradiation (a form of radiation used to kill bacteria) or biotechnology. Animals on organic farms eat organically grown feed, aren't confined 100 percent of the time and are raised without antibiotics or synthetic growth hormones.

For information on the health benefits of eating organic foods, visit [www.nextstep.state.mn.us](http://www.nextstep.state.mn.us).